

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Bumble Bee

Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension Inc

Bumble Bee Faces a Lean Transformation

Client Profile:

Bumble Bee, located in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, is a tuna processing company. Its headquarters is located in San Diego, California. There is a sister plant located in Trinidad and Tobago. The Puerto Rico facility employs 475 people.

Situation:

Bumble Bee faced employee layoffs, excessive WIP inventories, low quality yields, increasing scrap rates and poor performance. These factors, together with aggressive worldwide competition, moved its top management to rethink its manufacturing processes to include methodologies that could improve delivery, reduce costs, and provide a consistent lean driven operating framework, in order to keep the 30-year-old company open. In this initiative, the Workforce Investment Program (WIP), through its Rapid Response program, tapped resources and called upon Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension Inc (PRiMEX), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to support Bumble Bee's transformation of its local operations.

Solution:

PRiMEX Lean Performance Consultants toured the facilities using the Toyota plant-wide assessment and together with BB Management team and Organizational Development Consultant designed a "lean" transformation strategy. This provided a starting point, a customized Lean Champion, which included additional diagnostics, intensive lean training, change management, financial reorganization, value stream mapping on a pilot area, kaizens to implement changes, and project management for follow up. Over 40 hours in training coupled with 40 hours of kaizens kicked off the project. The packing machine area was selected for the first kaizen since it showed the highest opportunities - a very low Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE) (less than 50 percent), and a low FTT yield (58 percent). A team of employees from all areas was selected as Lean Champions and coach in lean tools with the selection of a Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) as first Kaizen. This TPM was performed to the selected pilot line - three machines integrated in sequence. Two teams of 10 employees each, which included supervisors from different shifts, engineers, maintenance, storeroom, accounting, production and quality personnel, were responsible for the Kaizen, under the guidance of PRiMEX Performance Consultants. A design of experiment using machine speed versus quality of output was performed. The data obtained pinpointed the optimum speed that would provide the yield objective of 90 percent. Running the machine at the stated speed increased OEE to more than 75 percent with a 90 percent yield. The number of units packed increased by 50 percent with the same amount of personnel and the same number of shifts.

Results:

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- * OEE increased to more than 75 percent, a 50 percent increase.
- * FTT increased to more than 90 percent, a 55 percent increase.
- * Increased productivity by 50 percent.
- * Reduced overtime with no additional hires.

Testimonial:

"The results of these kaizens pay off the program and give confidence to the people on their potential. This is the kind of results we need for our transformation."

Zulma Rivera, General Manager